



PUBLIC SAFETY

"Ensuring a Safe
Harford"

EDUCATION

"Preparing Now,
Building for the Future"

EFFICIENCY IN GOVERNMENT

"Governing Smarter"

ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY

"Growing and Sustaining
Harford's Prosperity"

ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

"Protecting Our
Environment"

QUALITY LIVING

"Safeguarding What is
Important to Harford
County Citizens"

Press Release

HARFORD COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Office of the County Executive

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Response of County Executive David R. Craig To the State of the State Address of Governor Martin O'Malley

(Bel Air, MD) - - Harford County Executive David R. Craig issued the following statement in response to Governor Martin O'Malley's "State of the State" address:

The O'Malley Administration continues to speak of growing Maryland economy, expanding job opportunities and to strengthen Maryland's middle class, yet his proposals threaten their very existence. .

Although the focus of the O'Malley Administration is projected to be job creation by the choices he is asking the Maryland General Assembly to make this session, the reality is those choices will in fact take us backwards as we slowly try to recover from this economic crisis. During the past few years our country has dealt with one of the worst economic recessions in history, yet although we are still recovering from that dark period , the O'Malley Administration proposal for increases in certain fees, the income tax and implementing a sales tax on gasoline will not move Maryland forward, but instead stifle the promise of recovery and push Maryland families and businesses down a slippery slope to further economic uncertainty.

Increasing fees, raising taxes, especially a sales tax on gasoline will cripple Maryland's already fragile economy and destroy the budgets of small businesses and hard working families, the backbone of America. While the gas tax is being promoted as a way to improve investments in key transportation projects, there is no safe guard to ensure that these proposed increases in funds will actually be directed to transportation and infrastructure needs.

Likewise, passing along teacher pensions to county governments to absorb when they are already strapped by other actions the state and federal government has taken is not only unfair, but unwise and without merit. For decades, local governments have shouldered the responsibility of funding local education while having to implement the unfunded mandates passed down from the Federal and State government. Sadly, as a local official, I have very little ability to demand accountability and oversight on education spending, yet, we are asked to shoulder the costs.

(more)

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It is true there are no easy solutions the myriad of fiscal issues which confront our great state. However passing along the fiscal problems of the state to county and local governments as well as small businesses on Main Street does nothing to address the problem at its root – a government that spends beyond its means.

As County Executive of Harford County the past six years, I have been faced with a number of difficult fiscal decisions. Governing is not easy as it requires a leader to balance the divergent wants and needs of diverse community. However, my Administration has met these challenges head-on and conquered them.

We have lowered the tax burden on our citizens, trimmed our workforce, while continuing to provide quality service to the citizens we serve.

As County Executive I have had to make very tough decisions that keeps government living within a balanced budget each year, with no one to pass on my costs to. The State of Maryland should do the same and live within their means.

Additional taxes without serious reductions in government spending, or reform in how it operates is not what the people of Maryland want or deserve.

I strongly recommend the legislature reject the Governor's proposal to increase fees, increase taxes and the pressure to pass along teacher pensions to the counties and do the job they were elected to do – make tough decisions to keep Maryland on the path to economic recovery and prosperity.

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“Preserving Harford’s past; promoting Harford’s future”